

SPRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every Day for the Evening Telegraph.

THE GREAT IRISH QUESTION.

From the N. Y. Tribune.

That the Irish problem fundamentally involves the whole British land system; that it is an enormous type of evils under which all oppressed peoples groan; and that it is a warning to every country, however free, ought to be remarked. Those who felt that our negroes might in time cry out against some added crime of landlordism may observe what men of the race of O'Connell suffer from the countrymen of Wilberforce. Again, too, we are bitterly reminded of that immense English sin of might-worship as formulated by the philosopher who glorified the Jamaica massacre, and, conceiving that nothing could be better than a landlord king and a tenant subject, sneered at the gospel of the poor according to McCrowdy. Here now is wretched McCrowdy asking the beggarly right not to be made vassal of by Mr. Carlyle's wild beast of a landlord, praying with bloodshot eyes to be allowed to be thrifty, and not to be provoked to do murder. Unavailing lamentation and heart-break have been heard from year to year. Irish crores have torn their hair, and sweethearts and wives, like sweet Maggie McCormick, have gone distracted. Men of more utter baseness than Irish landlords were never known, saith the Times of 1852. But the widow of McCrowdy still weeps like Rachel, and will not be comforted, and some of her children emigrate and build ramparts of national hatred against the blundering tyranny which, century after century, has cast in evictions and exiles the seeds of ill-will. By-and-by it may be that a martyred and humble people will work out an unforeseen revenge. England made Catholic, as some of her converts threaten, would be more than poetic retribution; but Englishmen convinced that only by justice to Ireland can they themselves be redeemed in Church, State, and society, would argue a sufficient pang.

We have no want of testimony as to Irish wrongs. Mr. Bright thought that the larger landlordism of the English Government was brutal. Mr. Gladstone admits a tragic retrospect when he says that Ireland ought to be governed for Irishmen. Lord Clarendon describes landlordism as felony. Professor Rogers, of Oxford, writes that Ireland's social condition is the grossest scandal, and that from no fault of a thrifty people. Shameful it is to think that in this year of Christian grace, 8450 landlords, mostly Protestants, dispose of 540,000 tenants, and back of them six millions of people, mainly Catholics. Ulster tenant right, by which a tenant may sell his good will to an incoming, is the best that has yet been done for Irishmen, and still seems vastly in favor of the landlord, since it generally relieves him of any charge for tenant-made improvements, and does not secure the farmer against capricious evictions, or political evictions, either because he does not marry, nor does not pay, or does not vote as his liege lord requires. Ninety-five per cent. of Irish farmers have no leases whatever, and may be evicted, which is to say transported, at any moment.

What the Irishman most earnestly desires is to be rooted in the land he passionately loves. Prussia has given the right of hereditary fixture to her peasants; England has given immunities to her Indian ryots against evictions, not to speak of her endowing Pagans when Roman Catholics are neglected. The Irish tenant asks for a right to his improvements, security against the arbitrary raising of rent, and fixity of holding. Mr. Bright's loan scheme, including the purchase of the estates of absentees, and the famous Prussian land system, equally aim to make the tenant a proprietor. For the honor of human nature, we hope that the British Government will do more than adopt the proposed later tenant system. Against any cowardly yielding to that respectable hardness of heart which has done so much to make criminal English statesmanship, the priesthood of Ireland show a unanimous phalanx of protest. At a time when Father O'Keefe calls Mr. Gladstone the greatest statesman of any age, and Cardinal Cullen, at the head of the tenants, declares against the Fenians, this is both warning and assuring. The land reform must come effectively, not merely as a concession, but, let us hope, also in the spirit of expiation.

MR. DELANO'S STUMP SPEECHES.

From the N. Y. World.

Mr. Delano takes the stump to gull the public with the idea that this administration, and he particularly, as the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, should be credited with an increase of that revenue for fiscal year 1869 over what it was in 1868. He goes on to say, in one of his speeches, that in 1868 only 6,709,546 gallons of whisky paid tax, while during 1869 62,009,331 gallons paid tax, and that during the last six months of the fiscal year 1869 there was a revenue gain over the corresponding months of 1868 of \$4,082,000 on tobacco, \$16,000 on fermented liquors, \$41,000 on gross receipts, \$165,000 on sales, \$1,864,000 on income, \$112,000 on banks, \$135,000 on gas, and \$850,000 on stamps.

Mr. Delano's assumption of any agency whatever in promoting this increase is ridiculous.

1. The existing administration, under which Mr. Delano holds (and, we suspect, desires indefinitely to hold) office, only came into power four months before the expiration of the fiscal year 1869, during which period, instead of devoting itself to the collection of the revenues or any other good public work, it devoted itself to a system of wholesale guilting of officers in the public service, which, by retarding that service, lost to the treasury millions of dollars. Those four months saw Mr. Delano giving his attention, and energies likewise, not so much to the augmentation of the income of the country as to the confirmation of the power of his party. So far as the public weal is concerned, this self-glorifying politician might better have been in Kamtschatka than at the head of the revenue office.

2. The Congressional legislation and national business growth, which really had to do with the revenue increase of 1869, promoted it in spite of the arbitrary action of Secretary Boutwell and Mr. Delano. In the items of whisky and tobacco the effect of that legislation and national growth is sufficient for the purpose of this showing. Mr. Delano, contrasting as above the revenue receipts on whisky in 1868 from those in 1869, estimates that, adding the 4,227,101 gallons which were withdrawn from bond for export to the quantity yielding tax for home consumption, we had less than 11,000,000 gallons as the represented total production of the country for 1868. But he fails to state year, and kept there until after the reduction of the tax. Though the whisky production of 1868 fell somewhat short of the usual

total, there was enough made to have come to tax and to have yielded a revenue equal to that of the year before, had the enormous tax not kept it out of the market and forced it into bond. Holders knew that the tax must fall under the current pressure, and naturally refrained from taking out the article for which there was no sale, and paying the two dollars tax.

When the tax was reduced, the whisky in bond was removed. The enormous quantities which thus escaped from bond, added to the increased distillation stimulated by the reduction, all paid tax, of course, and swelled the revenues on whisky during the last fiscal year to the sum which Mr. Delano has the effrontery to claim as the fruit of his own diligence. With some slight difference, the same causes that thus operated in favor of the revenue on whisky operated in favor of the tax on tobacco. Mr. Delano's share in the course pursued by the administration tended rather to prevent the collection of the tax on the total quantities of these articles which were thrown on the market; his claim that he created this increase of the revenue derived from them is therefore the more preposterous.

FALSIFYING FIGURES.

From the N. Y. Times.

When the World's reporter put into the mouth of Mr. S. S. Cox the extraordinary assertion that the national debt is now larger than at the close of the war, that gentleman indignantly repudiated the statement, and characterized as "a sham" the reporting which rendered its publication possible. But the World editorially promulgates what is equally untrue and absurd. Apropos of Mr. Boutwell's recent exhibit, it insists that, on the Secretary's own showing, the total reduction of the debt effected since the 1st March is but \$1,866,366, instead of more than sixty-four millions, as has been claimed in behalf of the administration.

Either the World has been imposed upon by the marvelous arithmetic which it brings into use at election times, or it is intent upon playing the partisan at the expense of truth. Here is the statement it puts forth:

	March 1.	Nov. 1.
Debt bearing coin interest	\$2,107,824,050	\$2,107,938,500
Debt bearing currency interest	71,140,000	61,640,000
Matured debt	6,422,453	4,389,000
Debt bearing no interest	421,518,180	421,880,000
Bonds issued to Pacific Railroads	53,907,000	62,188,320
Total debt	\$2,660,901,083	\$2,658,955,277
Absolute decrease in eight months		\$1,945,806

According to the World, then, there has actually been an increase of the debt bearing coin interest, and an increase also of the amount issued to the Pacific Railroad; while the reduction is limited to the currency interest debt and the matured debt. This is the story which a leading Democratic organ attempts to foist upon its readers.

Now what is the fact? One of Mr. Boutwell's earliest official acts, the application of surplus funds to the formation of a sinking fund, in compliance with the law of 1862. The wisdom of that law it were idle here to discuss; it is in operation, and the Secretary has deemed himself bound to obey its provisions. In pursuance of this law, he has purchased and set aside as a sinking fund gold interest bonds exceeding in amount sixty-four millions. These bonds have not been destroyed, and therefore appear in the Treasury statement as a part of the debt. But they belong to the Government, which has redeemed them; they cannot under any circumstances be reissued, and the amount they cover represents a real reduction of the debt. Congress may, if it choose, order them to be destroyed; but whether it does this or permits the sinking fund to continue, the result will be practically the same. The bonds have been redeemed, and a reduction of the public debt effected to the extent of \$64,197,934, as the following comparison proves:

FUNDED GOLD-BEARING DEBT UNITED STATES.		
	March 1, 1869.	Nov. 1, 1869.
United States 5-20s	\$1,609,587,500	\$1,602,660,000
Less in sinking fund		64,197,934
Outstanding 5-20s	\$1,602,587,500	\$1,538,462,066
Other gold bonds	602,366,500	602,366,500
Total gold stocks	\$2,107,824,050	\$2,040,828,566
Reduction by new administration		\$64,197,934

The reduction in October was not less than \$7,336,000, and if the rate be maintained the first twelve months of the Grant administration will show a diminution of the debt not far short of a hundred millions.

The World may not like these facts, because they reflect credit on a Republican administration; but it will gain nothing by the perversion of figures, however ingenious, or by falsehood, however plausible.

THE PRESS IN ELECTIONS.

From the N. Y. World.

Those persons who doubt the power of the press—if any such persons there still are—are respectfully referred to the results of the recent municipal election in Chicago. The Republican majority in the city is so decided that the contests have degenerated into squabbles for the nominations, and the election has been merely the registration of a foregone conclusion. As is apt to be the case where the majority is so powerful as not to be in fear of an organized and vigorous minority, the city government, being practically chosen in secret conclave, has become shamefully corrupt, and its prizes have become mere matters of bargain and sale. The spoils of the persons thus put in office had become so intolerable that a newspaper movement was started to cleanse the stables of the unclean official class.

The Chicago Republican headed the movement by calling together a number of well-known citizens to take counsel concerning these things. The ticket nominated at that conference was supported by the Republican Tribune, and Journal (Republican newspapers), and the Times (Democratic newspaper). Opposed to them were only one English paper—an evening journal of some ability, but no influence—and one German paper. The ticket backed by the ring was triumphantly defeated by the ticket nominated and upheld by the press.

The significance of this election is that it was carried purely by a movement of the press. There was none of the usual machinery of "primaries" and nominating conventions, which most citizens have come to regard as indispensable to an elevation, and which many well-meaning persons have made efforts to purge by way of securing the purity of elections. The fact is, if these things fall into the control of a powerful "ring," there is no way given among men whereby they may be wrested from that control. The honest man who may feel moved, by a sense of public duty, to attend them do so in vain; for they find that their own lack of organization makes them, even if they are numerically in the majority, an easy prey to the scoundrels who have possession of the party machinery, and whom long practice enables to manipulate it successfully. When public opinion becomes clearly outraged, and finds that the regular partisan organization gives it only the chance of choosing between two sets of scoundrels, the effective way is

for the recognized exponents of public opinion—that is, the newspapers—to give it shape by combining to name and advocate a ticket independent of party ties.

Of course, the press could not have done this unless public opinion had been with it. But it is equally true that public opinion could not have effected it without the aid of its newspaper organs. There are many reasons why it is not desirable that nominations should usually be made in this way. In fact, the success of the movement in Chicago is to be ascribed to the fact that it was exceptional. If the nominations were habitually managed by the press, the press would become as corrupt as the present machinery for the selection of candidates. But it is worth the attention of "rings" in all large cities that there is a point where public forbearance with their swindles ceases, and that, when that point is reached, there is, in an united press, a mode of organizing an opposition which is potent enough utterly to upset them and their schemes.

THE SUB-TREASURY SYSTEM—RADICAL REFORMS REQUIRED.

From the N. Y. Sun.

Recent events in regard to the Sub-Treasury in this city have raised the question as to the safety of the public money under the system now in operation. That system was devised thirty years ago because certain banks, in which the public money was deposited, had failed and become defunct to the Government. Theoretically the system may be sound, but the laws and usages which now regulate it were not made to protect such enormous accounts as are now in the vaults of some of our Sub-Treasuries.

In this city, for example, the amount of public funds under the control of the Sub-Treasurer ranges from seventy millions to ninety millions of dollars, and may one long reach even one hundred millions. This vast sum, it will be remembered, does not consist of paper evidences of Government indebtedness, which cannot be illegally and clandestinely disposed of without counterfeiting the signatures of official personages. It consists almost entirely of coin and bonds which can be passed from hand to hand as easily as a gold eagle or a greenback.

The amount of security which the Sub-Treasurer of this city is required to give for the faithful keeping and disbursing of these seventy or eighty millions is understood to be eight hundred thousand dollars, and his annual compensation for discharging his faithfully seventy responsibilities is six thousand dollars. Now, according to the usual requirements of the courts, a party who holds money in a fiduciary capacity is obliged to give security in about double the amount which, on the average, he will be likely to have under his control from time to time. And in fixing the compensation of such a party, the courts, in addition to allowing pay for services and expenditures, have often awarded him two and three per cent. on the amount in which his surmises were required to justify, it being presumed that in some way such a party had to pay or indemnify his bondsmen for their risks.

Viewed in the light of these facts, how grossly inadequate appears the amount of the security exacted of the Sub-Treasurer in this city; and what prudent man, with capacity and character enough to fill the office, would desire to assume its onerous responsibilities for so paltry a salary? No wonder that General Dix declared that the months in which he held this office were the most anxious of his whole life, nor that Mr. Van Dyck threw up the trust partly because he would not carry so heavy a burden for such a small remuneration.

The system needs to be reformed in many particulars. Two changes are immediately and imperiously demanded: not to intrust any such enormous sums to the custody of one person; and to exact from those who hold the public money an amount of security reasonably proportionate to the sums in their hands. Will the Secretary of the Treasury and Congress reform this vicious and worn-out system?

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